GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3352
ANSWERED ON:15.04.2002
TIMBER MAFIA
KANTI SINGH;MOHAMMED SHAHABUDDIN;RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem captioned `Uttranchal Government hand-in-glove with timber Mafia` appearing in Indian Express dated February 13, 2002;

(b) if so, the details and facts of the matter reported therein;

(c) whether any probe has been made in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the further steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b),(c),(d) & (e) According to the newsitem, Shri J.P. Dabral has accused that, Power Grid Corporation, Ministry of Environment & Forests, Uttranchal Government and two private companies which have been awarded the contract for laying high tension wires from Tehri to Meerut have conspired with the timber mafia to destroy the forests of the region. It has been alleged that the Corporation is planning to fell five to six lakh trees, when only 90,000 trees required to be cut for laying the transmission line.

According to the clearance given by the Central Government, the total number of trees involved in construction of this powerline through forest areas in Tehri, Narendra Nagar, Dehradun and Rajaji National Park was 91,766.However, the permission has been revoked and an alternative alignment worked out for the transmission line in the Rajaji National Park. The new alignment reduces the number of trees to be felled substantially.